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Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 97-27

Document # 68a

Refs: A. [REDACTED]

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

B. [REDACTED]

1. Following paras summarize Colonel Loan's description of "young turks" present plans and intentions [REDACTED]

14 April. This message has been seen only by Ambassador Lodge, Deputy Ambassador Porter, and Political Counselor Habib in Embassy. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] No other U. S. personnel informed. Ambassador Lodge requests message be held very tightly Washington.

2. Colonel Loan began by asking whether U. S. Government still supports Ky government. [REDACTED] answer was that as recently as afternoon of 13 April [REDACTED] Ambassador Lodge say that USG recognizes and supports Ky government. Loan expressed satisfaction at this reply and then proceeded to make following points [REDACTED]

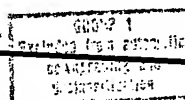
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a. He had returned from Danang on Sunday, 10 April, thoroughly disgusted with the Government's failure to handle the Danang uprising with the speed and decisiveness that would have minimized casualties and started return of I Corps to GVN authority and order. He now felt Danang rapidly slipping back into hands Struggle Forces, and soon whole job would have to be done over again, but this time with more bloodshed and resulting bitterness. [REDACTED]

b. On Wednesday morning, i. e., 13 April, he called on Ky. He reminded Ky of existence and loyalty of Young Turk Group (YTG), emphasized fact they are professional military men, had mostly seen much fighting, and were not prepared see government flounder and perhaps be replaced by government of either southerners or Tri Quang followers, since such developments would lead to neutralism, then negotiations, VC/DRV takeover; YTG also unwilling see I Corps uprising continue and spread. Accordingly, Loan told Ky time had come for Ky to stop negotiating and talking

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2.

while country and Army disintegrate. He, Ky, must accept full responsibility for country's survival, and YTG would support him fully.

c. Loan then told Ky that he had arranged formation of new and responsible Catholic group (see Embtel 3949) on 13 April, which designed control of muffle Father Hoanh Quyen and publicly disassociate northern Catholics from southern efforts organize new political front behind General Tran Van Don. Loan intimated he and YTG working for same purposes among Hoa Hao and Cao Dai, and that General Don who was no fighter would no longer have either courage or necessary following to seek premiership. Loan also claimed responsibility for extricating and bringing to National Political Congress, meeting Saigon 12-14 April, students who testified persuasively on 14th about Struggle Committee activities and purposes. Loan also said Buddhists had last evening indicated they might wish join in deliberations of NPC. Loan said he had advised against permitting this since he said their only purpose would be to try wreck what had been or was being accomplished by NPC. (Note that Thuan called himself representative of people when he appeared at NPC sessions on 14 April.)

d. When Ky remonstrated that situation very difficult and he needed more time, Loan acknowledged difficulty but said situation desperate and Ky had only until this weekend (16-17 April) to formulate own plans for dealing with situation. If he didn't produce plan of his own, YTG prepared recommend Ky adopt their plan. When Ky asked what the YTG group had to suggest, Loan outlined program, following portions of which he described [REDACTED]

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(1) Take advantage of popular demand for abolition or change in composition of National Leadership Council (NLC) or Directory. In short, appear to yield to public demand and either reorganize old or establish new body which should also include respected civilians leaders and exclude such conspicuously corrupt officers as Vinh Loc (II Corps), Quang (IV Corps), and General Co, each of whom had contributed to unpopularity to present government and also discredited military profession. Loan suggested that Thieu also be jettisoned since he recently known to be exploring possibility joining southern grouping led by General Don.

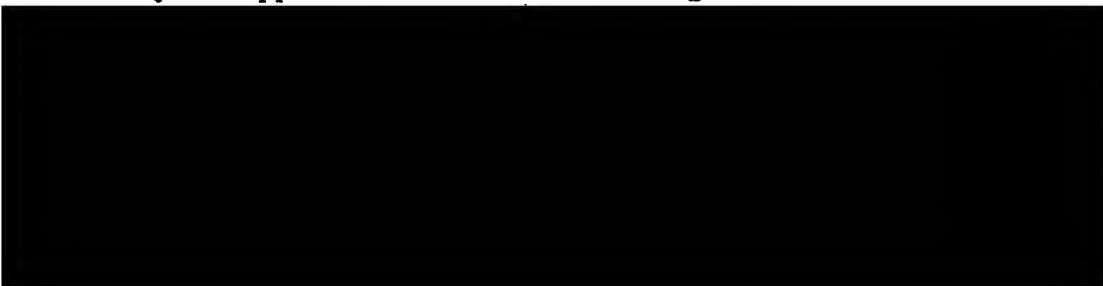
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(2) Agree with what Loan believed would be conclusions of present Political Congress, namely resolutions in favor of elected government in near future with present government acting as interim government, but say that with rebellion in I Corps, communist threat, and political disorders and demonstrations in capital, country obviously not ready for full-scale democratic institutions; hence government while agreeing with desirability democratization, must delay full application for little while longer than NPC desired.

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(3) Generals removed from new Directory or whatever it might be called would be reassigned to military duties in a reorganized military structure. One major reform would be abolition of present delegate duties and territorial responsibilities of ARVN corps commanders. Instead these officers would revert to being tactical commanders, with no political, administrative, or territorial responsibilities. Central government would hereafter deal directly with province chiefs on these latter responsibilities. Loan emphasized no retiring, no exile, and no embassies abroad for military officers in trouble. Instead they'd be given new assignments and would either perform in job or be shot.

(4) Loan then indicated he and his YTG colleagues fed up with much of present military leadership, and it was for this reason they now backing Ky because he was brave, was not corrupt, and could be decisive if properly supported. He indicated that YTG included more than 50 per cent of field grade combat unit commanders, particularly in vicinity of Saigon, and cited two examples: deputy commander, chief of staff, and four bn commanders of airborne; and similar involvement of marines. Loan also claimed YTG adherents in some units ARVN 1st Div I Corps.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In this connection, Ky apparently told Loan that he

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had been informed on 12 April that Loan back at work at MSS. Loan's reply was that he had only come back to work long enough to sign pay checks for MSS staff, and otherwise he had been continuously busy behind scenes trying support Ky's purposes and control YTG. (Loan indicated that some of YTG group hard to control, and less patient than Loan himself.) Loan then said to Ky that as result his recent activities he knew better than Ky where latter's principal officers were. For example, Ky probably thought Mayor was at City Hall. This not correct. Dr. Cua now at Airborne Headquarters. Similarly, his Marine Commandant and Armor Commander were not at CMD Headquarters or JGS, but at Marine and Armored Unit CPS. Asked which generals aware of YTG existence, and supporting and/or condoning YTG purposes, Loan replied General Tri (III Corps), General Khang (Marines), General Cao Van Vien (Chief, JGS), General Lien Quang Vien (new Minister National Security), and General Ky himself. However, generals excluded from YTG membership.

e. Loan predicted bloodshed today or tonight (14th), and said Tri Quang street tactics Saigon and struggle tactics I Corps underlined need for period of firm government, and basically what he and YTG were proposing was kind and short dictatorship by military which alone in present circumstances had capability insuring survival of country. In one and one half to two years, democratic practices desired by people could be introduced, but not at moment of confusion and weakness, like present.

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3. [REDACTED] YTG obviously of some use to Ky now, giving him [REDACTED] excuse for saying "No" to some proposals, although not clear whether he will continue welcome kind of close monitoring they may try provide. Basically, however, believe Ky and YTG compatible, at least for short haul, because like ages, experience, idealism, etc.

4. As additional indication of YTG role, General Khang, Marine and CMD Commanders, is reliably reported to have said evening of 13 April that if some immediate action in the current political situation isn't taken the situation would continue to deteriorate despite interim political compromises. He felt that the

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"baby Turks" would take action sooner or later against the Buddhists and other political agitators and also against the ineffective and corrupt members of the military leadership. He feels he should support this movement, that it is the only solution. He maintains that there's only one possible form of government for Vietnam: a strong military dictatorship. He said that Vietnam is not ready for democracy or civilian rule. He said if the U. S. Government wanted to save the situation the U. S. Government had to act now.

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